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Aristotle on the Good

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BY

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Chapter I

The Universal Good

No Greek thinker after Plato could afford to neglect a consideration of the good; the very emphasis which the Academy under its first master had placed upon the Idea of the Good introduced into Greek thought, if not a new concept, at least a very definite philosophical problem, namely, what the good is. Aristotle begins his Nichomachean Ethics with a statement of what he took to be the common acceptation of the good: "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim."[1] But even though any thinker may well have agreed that the good may be understood as "that at which all things aim," this mere generalization could not serve to distinguish from the opinions of others his own view of what the good is and what role it plays in reality as a whole. In the case of Aristotle the significance of this description crystallizes a wealth of his own philosophical thought on the problem of the good that he inherited from the Platonists.

Where his own philosophic opinions are solutions of problems that had been faced by other thinkers, it is customarily in their contrast to the answers advanced by the others that he presents them; and it is largely against the background of the Platonic theory of the Ideas that he philosophizes. Particularly in his solution of the problem which we propose here to discuss is this true. As far as the nature of the good is concerned,

namely, what it is by reason of which things are called good, the concept of "that at which all things aim" might just as well apply to the Platonic Good; for, so understood, it may be taken, on the one hand, as merely the good-in-general or, on the other, as some one and the same universal and subsistent Good such as Aristotle considered the Platonists to mean.

It does not agree with his own thought, however, to accept the latter interpretation of the nature of the good for the reason that no universal can be a substance in the precise fashion in which he interpreted the Platonists to mean it. Although the term "substance" may admit of various usages, Aristotle holds that "substance, in the truest and primary and most definite sense of the word, is that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present is a subject, "[2] whereas everything else other than substance lacks one or both of these characteristics.[3] Aristotle allows that the term be applied to those universals signifying the species of the genera into which the primary substances fall;[4] but, properly speaking, those things are called substances which underlie everything else either as the subject in which all other things are present or as the subject of which they are predicated.[5]

These characteristics of primary substance are clearly in Aristotle's mind when he comes to the explicit examination of whether any universal can be a substance. The very universality signified by a universal term, as opposed to the singularity of the primary substance, makes a subsistent universal impossible. The individuality proper to substance means precisely that the substance of a thing belongs to nothing else but to

that thing of which it is the substance. The universal, on the contrary, is common to many individuals of the same class and belongs exclusively to none. If it is to be a substance, it will be the substance either of all or of none of the members of the class. For to call it the substance of one member only is to identify that member with every other as a single individual. The universal, on the supposition that it is a substance, would be predicated alike of all its individuals and would thus belong to every other member in the same way that it belongs to that of which it is supposed to be the substance, namely, as the substance; but things possessing an identical substance constitute, in virtue of the fact that substance belongs alone to that of which it is the substance, a numerical identity. But by the same token, neither can the universal be the substance of all the individuals of a class, for then it could be peculiar to no individual as its substance.[6] Furthermore, even the fact that the universal is predicable of anything whatever denies it primary substantiality.[7] As a universal predicate, moreover, it indicates not a "this" or a primary substance, but rather a "such" or a quality.[8]

Aristotle sums up his position when he applies the argument to the universals "being" and "unity":

> In general nothing that is common is substance; for substance does not belong to anything but to itself and to that which has it, of which it is the substance. Further, that which is one cannot be in many places at the same time, but that which is common is present in many places at the same time; so that clearly no universal exists apart from its individuals.[9]

This is precisely his objection to the subsistent universal Ideas or Forms of the Platonists. The Ideas must be considered to be substances since

their participants share in them as in something not predicated of a subject, that is, as in an individual;[10] and if they are substances, it is right to grant them separate existence.[11] But the difficulty is how they can be allowed subsistence if the "one-over-many", the character common to several individuals, is the Form. This would make the universal to exist apart from its individuals, and thus would follow the impossibility of a substance and that of which it is the substance having existence apart from each other.[12] The difficulties[13] attendent upon substantializing a universal term are inescapable in the Aristotelian thought. Substantiality and universality are, in a sense, inversely proportionate.[14] Taking substance in the strict sense, however, if anything is a substance in this way, it cannot be a universal in any sense; and, per contra, if anything is universal, it cannot be a substance. The universal subsistent Good of the Platonists falls under the same criticism as the other Ideas. As a matter of fact, to Aristotle the Idea of the Good would have even a less valid claim to substantiality than the universal representing a species or genus of substance; for at least the latter, and especially species, constitutes the appropriate definition in which the primary substance falls and by that token alone is allowed to be considered substance.[15]

The universal good, therefore, which Aristotle accepts as the object of aim cannot be a subsistent entity. Rather it is merely the universal conception that applies in common to those things which, as being desirable, are good; and, in consequence, it possesses, not the unity of a primary substance, but merely a logical unity.

Chapter II

Predication of the Good

The logical unity of the universal good by virtue of which it is predicated of those things that are good gives rise to the further question of the manner in which it is predicated of them. Many things whose very mode of being are different are called "good." The term "good" is attributed to all those beings which the Platonists called participants in the Idea of the Good; but the fact that those beings do not belong to the same genus of being presents the problem of whether or not "good" is applied to all of them with the same meaning in each case.

In this question it is in his antithesis to the Platonic view that Aristotle takes up the problem and subjects the Idea of the Good to criticism precisely on the point that it must be predicated in the same sense or univocally of all things that are called good by participation in it. For Aristotle considers the proponents of the theory of the Ideas to have postulated the Ideas set over classes of things in which they admitted no priority and posteriority in the respect in which the individual of any class belonged to it and shared in the Idea of it.[1] But "good", on the other hand, falls into all the categories; it has as many senses as "being." It is applied, for example, in the category of substance to God and to reason, in that of quantity to the moderate amount, in that of quality to the virtues, in that of relation to the useful, in that of time to the opportune, in that of place to the right locality. It follows, therefore, that there is no universal Good univocally predicable of all goods; for substance, the *per se* existent,

is prior in nature, for example, to what is only relative.[2] In consequence, the good would have a prior and posterior sense in being predicated of things which are in their natures prior or posterior in respect to one another. If, on the contrary, the good were taken as univocal, it would have to be predicable in only a single category; and the absurd consequence would follow that things falling into the other categories could not be called good.[3]

In this criticism of Plato, Aristotle comes closest to the explicit solution of the problem involved in the predication of "good." He begins the Nichomachean Ethics with a consideration of what the good-in-general means, and he makes the nature of the good the occasion for his criticism of the Ideal Good because the latter was considered to be universal and not restricted to ethical matters. "We had perhaps better consider the universal good and discuss thoroughly what is meant by it,"[4] he begins and apologizes for his attack on his former master and fellows; but though his criticism establishes the impossibility of an univocal universal good, he hardly considers the problem adequately treated. When the consideration of the universal good has served its purpose, he dispenses with it. "What then," he asks, "do we mean by the good? It is surely not like the things that only chance to have the same name. Are goods one, then, by being derived from one good or by all contributing to one good, or are they rather one by analogy?.....But perhaps these subjects had better be dismissed for the present; for perfect precision about them would be more appropriate to another branch of philosophy."[5]

Considering that "good" predicates in the same fashion as "being", Aristotle's own answer to the question is the second alternative named; that

is, "good" is predicated by analogy or proportion. The branch of philosophy to which he refers a more accurate solution of the question is evidently the Metaphysics where the predication of "being", but not explicitly "good", is considered in various contexts. The "senses of being" of which he makes use in his analysis are the categories. While "is" belongs to all things that can be said to be, it answers to various senses in respect of the way they are. Primarily and in a simple sense it belongs to substance; and only secondarily and in a limited sense it belongs to quantity, quality, relation, and the other categories. For substance is prior to the other senses of "being", firstly, in definition because it must enter into the definition of the others, secondly, in knowledge because a thing is known in the strictest sense by what it is rather than by the accidental features that it possesses, and thirdly, in time because all the other things have their being only in substance. Consequently, substance alone <u>is</u> by no mere ambiguity; but with the other categories the case is different. In regard to them, it is like the use of "is" in the case of that which "is not," as some say, with emphasis on the linguistic form, that what is not <u>is</u>, not is simply but is non-existent.[6]

How, then, may it be said that "being" is predicated of all the categories, recognizing that it has prior and posterior significations corresponding to the priority or posteriority of the thing of which it is predicated? The truth is, Aristotle points out, that we do not mean the same thing in each case nor do we mean different things; that is, the predication is neither univocal nor equivocal.[7] Rather, "being" is predicated <u>in virtue of a reference to one and the same thing</u>. The case is the same as

the predication of "healthy" or "medical." Everything that is called "healthy" is so called by a proportion to one central point, that is, health, as being, for example, preservative, productive, symptomatic, or capable of health. Everything called "medical" is likewise so called in virtue of its reference to a common end, as, for example, possessing the medical art, exercising it, being adapted to it, or being a function of it. "Health" itself and the "medical art" itself are called "healthy" and "medical" respectively, primarily and without such qualifications or such references. In the case of "being" substance is the central point of reference which is said to be simply, whereas all other things are by reference to substance. "Some things," Aristotle says in illustrating the point, "are said to be because they are substances, others because they are affections of substance, others because they are a process toward substance, or destructions or privations or qualities of substance, or productive or generative of substance, or of things that are relative to substance, or negations of one of these things or of substance itself."[8]

The case, as Aristotle has indicated, stands the same with the predication of "good." Its prior and posterior significations, corresponding to those of "beings", accounts for the fact that it is predicated neither univocally nor equivocally.[9] It is, therefore, like "being", an analogous term; every sense of "good" is referred to what is good in the strictest sense, namely, substance. Just as individuals in the categories of quantity, or quality, or relation, or the others are not unless they are quantities, qualities, or relations of a substance, so neither are such goods as the moderate amount, or the virtuous, or the useful, good unless they are the

moderate amount for a substance, the virtue of a substance, the useful to a substance.

Chapter III

The Good as Cause

The notion of the good as a cause in Aristotle's thought is implied in the statement that it is that at which all things aim, for then it appears as identified with the end considered as the final cause of any motion whatever; and it follows also from this conception that the good, as a cause, is pre-eminent among the causes. The four causes make their first explicit appearance in the Metaphysics as the starting-point and framework of the examination and criticism of the thought of previous philosophers in their search for principles and causes; and here the final cause is represented as "the purpose and the good," to which Aristotle adds by way of explanation "for this is the end of all generation and change."[1] Throughout the subsequent criticism whenever he turns expressly to the consideration of the final cause in previous philosophy, he retains the same conception: in relation to those who posited more than a material cause, he calls it "that for whose sake actions and changes and movements take place;"[2] and in relation to the Platonists, he calls it "that for whose sake both all mind and the whole of nature are operative."[3] This connection with the field of change establishes the good as a motive principle in all change, but a principle which, as aimed at, exercises its causality at both terms of the motion. For it is the end, but only in the sense in which that term is employed to denote the final cause or purpose of the motion. In a discussion of the meaning of the term "limit" Aristotle makes this distinction by pointing out that one of the senses of "limit" is equivalent to "the end of the

thing" which, in general, means only a last stage towards which movement and action are and not that from which they are; he adds, however, "sometimes it is both, that from which and that to which the movement is, i.e. the final cause."[4] Thus, he excludes from purposive action, that is, action done for a good, those movements owing to chance and spontaneity[5] which can be said to come to an end in the sense of a last stage, but not because of the end as the limiting point at which the motion is aimed from its initiation.[6] As the limit taken in this sense, the good is attained in the completion of the motion, "for things are complete in virtue of having attained their end."[7] The kind of causality which the good exercises, considered as both the beginning and the end of the motion, is that of a principle of motion which is itself unmoved.

Moreover, the good, considered in its relation to the other causes, is pre-eminently the cause of causes. When all things which can be called causes in the primary and non-accidental sense of the term are considered, they fall into the four familiar divisions: those which are substratum, those which are the essence, those which are the source of motion or rest, and finally those remaining which are the end. These last, however, Aristotle says, "are causes as the end and the good of the other things; for that for the sake of which other things are tends to be the best and the end of the other things."[8] And in a parallel discussion he repeats of the things which are final causes: "The others are causes in the sense of the end or the good of the rest; for 'that for the sake of which' means what is best and the end of the things that lead up to it."[9]

It is the fact that the end is a first principle or cause that

allows the good to enter at all into metaphysical inquiry, which is concerned with the principles and causes of all things; and it is the causal pre-eminence of the good which gives to Wisdom its architectonic character over all sciences:

> The science which knows to what end each thing must be done is the most authoritative of the sciences, and more authoritative than any ancillary science; and this end is the good of that thing, and in general the supreme good in the whole of nature. Judged by all the tests we have mentioned, then, [scil. that the wise man pursues his science for its own sake and orders but is not ordered] the name in question [scil. Wisdom] falls to the same science; this must be a science that investigates the first principles and causes; for the good, i.e. the end, is one of the causes.[10]

It is, moreover, the same pre-eminence of the good which makes Politics the most architectonic of all the arts inasmuch as the art which orders whatever is done in the state is the art which is conversant with the highest good of man.[11] And, in general, where many arts fall under the same capacity, it is the master art which determines the end for each of the inferiors.[12] Moreover, where the unity of the first philosophy appears as a matter for dispute, Aristotle argues, on one side of the question, that if there is a science corresponding to each of the causes, in one sense Wisdom ought to be that which deals with the good precisely from the fact that it is the most authoritative of the sciences and that the good is the cause for the sake of which the other causes are.[13]

Yet, on the other hand, the nature of the good as a principle whose causality is exercised over moving things is the very reason why, in regard to the office of Wisdom to investigate the causes of <u>all</u> things, the difficulty as to its unity should occur at all. As Aristotle puts the problem:

> There are many things to which not all the principles

> pertain. For how can a principle of change or the nature of the good exist for unchangeable things, since everything that in itself and by its own nature is good is an end, and a cause in the sense that for its sake the other things both come to be and are, and since an end or purpose is the end of some action, and all actions imply change? So in the case of unchangeable things this principle could not exist.[14]

This conception of the good as a motive cause and its consequent inseparability from the field of motion in which its final causality is exercised gives Aristotle further reason for rejecting a subsistent Good as a Platonic Idea. The Ideas of the Platonists he finds incapable of being a principle or cause in any sense whatever, but particularly does he find them to fail to account for the universal phenomenon of change in perceptible things. To be sure, it was in seeking the cause of perceptible things, the causes both of their being and their becoming, that the Platonists were led to posit the existence of subsistent and universal Forms; but the mode of causality which they were thought to exercise in respect to sensible substances, "sharing" or "participation", is to Aristotle so much empty talk.[15] For Forms, considered in their character as subsistent entities apart from the particular things of which they are said to be the causes, are not causes in any of the usual senses of "from."[16] This means to Aristotle that they fail as principles both of the being and of the becoming of things; for the senses in which a thing is said to come from another are exhausted by the four primary kinds of causality, material and formal, efficient and final, which are adequate to account for both being and becoming, and by two secondary senses, that in which a thing is said to come from the whole if it is an effect of the part in any one of the first four senses, and that which applies to the successive parts of a temporal sequence.[17] Aristotle does not allow

that the mode of "participation" corresponds to any of these literal and intelligible senses. To say that anything comes from the Idea as from a "pattern" is no more than a poetical metaphor; for evidently one thing may be or become like another without having been patterned after it, whether or not one calls that other eternal.[18] The result of attempting to explain perceptibles by subsistent and universal causes is that the Platonists have given up the search for the causes of perceptible things.[19] In the first place, a universal cause does not exist; the individual is caused by the individual, in the sense of matter, form, and agent.[20] In the second place, even if the Forms do exist as universals, they fail to contribute efficiency in regard to being and becoming. For the individual has its form and comes to have its form, at least in products of nature, by the activity of an agent specifically the same as its effect and adequate to causing the form to be in another matter; consequently the Ideas would still necessitate an agent for the things which are said to share in them.[21] If the Forms were supposed to be in particulars as well as being subsistent apart from them, they might be thought to be causes as entering into a composition, as white causes whiteness in the white object; but even this view is impossible.[22]

But if subsistent universal Ideas fail to explain the being and becoming of things either as material, formal, or efficient causes, no less are they useless as final causes. Aristotle points out that the Ideas in general have no connection with the final cause, namely, "that for whose sake both all mind and the whole of nature are operative."[23] As for the Idea of the Good, the Platonists indeed call the good a principle; but how it exercises its causality, whether as an end, an agent, or a form, they do not

say.[24] Rather, they really make the good a cause per accidens, no less than had Empedocles and Anaxagoras whose "friendship" and "reason", respectively, were classed as goods. "That for whose sake actions and changes and movements take place," Aristotle says of them, "they assert to be a cause in a way, but not in this way, i.e. not in the way in which it is its nature to be a cause.....It turns out that in a sense they both say and do not say the good is a cause; for they do not call it a cause qua good but only incidentally."[25] That is, the good is considered a cause in the sense that the cause operating to bring about the effect happens to be good or has the good connected with it as an incidental attribute, not in the sense that it is the final cause for whose sake the motion takes place.[26] As a matter of fact, the Platonists must suppose the good as a principle other than and superior to the Forms in order to explain their own theory of participation; otherwise the question why particular things come to participate in them and why they do participate in them remains unanswered.[27]

On the other hand, the good which Aristotle insists is a motive principle in all movements finds its causal virtue explained in his own theory of movement. And since movement, in its broadest sense, is the passage of anything from a state of potentiality to one of actuality, Aristotle's own solution lies in his conception of potency and act.

Aristotle points out that the term "potency" may have several senses; but disregarding those which are potencies only by an equivocation, as, for example, the so-called "powers" of figures in geometry, all potencies are originative sources of some kind, and each is called a potency by reference to what is primarily the meaning of the term. Potency in its primary

signification extends only to those things which involve a reference to motion, and thus its strictest sense applies to what is an "originative source of change in another thing or in the thing itself qua other."[28] The act of building, for instance, is a potency or a source of change which exists in something other than the thing being built, that is, in the agent who possesses the productive knowledge or the art of building by which he builds; the art of healing is a potency or a source of change in the doctor who heals himself, but the potency is in him as something other than himself qua healed, that is, in him as the agent who has the practical knowledge or the medical art by which he heals.[29] Other senses of potency relate to this sense. Thus, potency is likewise an originative source of a thing's being changed by another or by itself qua other. Bricks and stones, for example, have a potency for being changed into a house by the art of building exercised by the builder; the potency for being healed is in the doctor who heals himself, but it is in him not insofar as he is the agent or healer, but insofar as he is the patient or the healable. These two senses of potency, of acting on another and of being acted on by another, agree in that both are capacities. The difference is that the active potency resides in the agent and the passive potency resides in the patient. Moreover, each potency whether in the agent or the patient is a capacity for acting or suffering in the manner proper to it. An agent has the capacity of heating or building because it has heat or the art of building by which it can heat or can build; a patient has the potency of being burned or of being crushed because it is oily or yielding in a certain way.[30]

Actuality, on the other hand, is correlative to potency; and when

Aristotle comes to describe it, he says that it is the "existence of a thing not in the way which we express by 'potentially'"[31] The way in which potency and actuality are to be known is not by definition, but by their proportion to each other; and he illustrates the proportion by choosing particular cases in which, he notes, potency will be found to extend further than to that whose nature it is to move another or be moved by another. Actuality is to potency as the builder building is to the builder capable of building, as the thing awake to the thing asleep, as the seer exercising his sight to the seer with his eyes shut, as that which is shaped out of the matter to the matter unshaped, as that which is wrought to that which is unwrought. In consequence, actuality and potency are terms which themselves are used analogously. For the actual is said of that which exists as form to matter and of that which exists as movement to the capacity for movement.[32]

The relation of proportionality represented respectively by the actual and the potential gives rise to the question of priority and posteriority because wherever the analogy or proportion of several things occurs, it is a question of reference of one thing to another and of the central point to which the reference is made. For Aristotle, the problem, in one aspect, at least, is which of the two divisions of being in question can be called "complete" relative to the other, inasmuch as from the point of view of nature or "substantiality," that is, relative sufficiency of being,[33] the complete is prior to the incomplete. When Aristotle considers the question on this basis, he establishes the priority of the actual over the potential from the standpoint of the final cause or the good. An analysis of becoming shows that the posterior in the process of becoming is prior in nature

because that which is in the process of becoming has not yet its form whereas, on the contrary, the form is present at the realization of the process in the completely constituted being. For everything that moves moves toward an end for the sake of which the movement is, and the actuality at which the movement aims is the end or the good.[34]

The actual, then, is the complete reality; and by this line of reasoning it appears as such from its nature as the final cause. Potency is, on the other hand, incomplete reality relative to its proper actuality and is made complete by its actuality. The argument, Aristotle points out, applies to actuality in the sense both of the actual as form to matter[35] and of the actual as movement to the capacity for movement, that is, in those cases where the end is realized in the movement itself. For Aristotle draws the distinction sharply between active potencies whose exercise he calls "movements" and those whose exercise he calls "actualities", and the basis of the distinction is the end for the sake of which each exists. In the common and strict sense of the term, potency refers to the capacity of a being to move another or to be moved by another qua other, and thus also actuality in its common acceptation is identified with movement or the realization of this potency. That is why movement is commonly denied to non-existent things such as the objects of thought and desire; for if they were moved, they would have to be called actual. Aristotle himself does not accept the identification of actuality with movement, for movement as such is incomplete. Rather, he distinguishes "movements", properly so-called, whose end or actuality is realized in a product apart from the movement itself, from movements properly called "actualities" in which the end is present in and realized simultaneous-

ly with the movement itself. Making thin, walking, learning, building are examples of the former. These activities have a limit in the effect they are intended to produce; none of them is in the strictest sense an end in itself, but all are relative to the end for which they are exercised. The removing of fat, for example, is relative to the end of thinness in the bodily parts, which is not achieved while the process is going on, but which, when achieved, is the point at which the process is complete and at which the movement is said to have attained is actuality. So, too, with others of this kind; all of them are realized in the thing being produced. "The actuality," Aristotle says, "is in the thing that is being made, e.g. the art of building is in the thing that is being built and that of weaving in the thing that is being woven, and similarly in all other cases, and in general the movement is in the thing that is being moved."[36] On the other hand, such activities as seeing, understanding, theorizing, thinking, living, being happy are movements which have no such limit and whose end is the movement itself. "At the same time," Aristotle explains, "we are seeing and have seen, are understanding and have understood, are thinking and have thought.....At the same time we are living well and have lived well, are happy and have been happy. If not, the process would have had sometime to cease, as the process of making thin ceases: but, as things are, it does not cease; we are living and have lived."[37] The difference, then, between the actualization of the two kinds of active potencies lies in the manner in which the end is present to each. In productions, whether of art or nature, the end is outside the agent and the actuality is <u>in</u> the product, and, this being so, they are incomplete; in the other activities in which no product is aimed at outside of the activi-

ties themselves, the end is in the agent and the movement is complete in its very exercise. In this much, where the action is the end, the movement is properly an "actuality", and Aristotle notes that "even the word 'actuality' is derived from 'action', and points to complete reality."[38]

Thus it is that the actuality which is the complete reality existing at the term of any movement, whether it be the result of the realization of a capacity to receive or to act, or, in the latter case, whether it be the term of a "movement" in the proper sense or of an "actuality", is the end or the good for which the movement exists and for which it is initiated. It is in the attainment of the actuality proper to the potency of its being, then, that a thing is said to be complete in respect of having attained its end and thereby is said to be good.

Chapter IV

Nature and the Good

The priority of that which has its end or its good over that which lacks it, of the realized over the unrealized, of the complete over the incomplete, in short, of the actual over the potential, is at the basis of the emphasis which Aristotle places upon the function of any being, that whereby it attains the fulfillment of its potentialities.

> Matter exists in a potential state, just because it may come to its form, and when it exists actually, then it is in its form. And the same holds good in all cases, even those in which the end is a movement. And so, as teachers think they have achieved their end when they have exhibited the pupil at work, nature does likewise.[1]

When Aristotle undertakes an inquiry into nature, it is precisely from the point of view of the natural thing's function, the processes whereby each thing realizes its good in the actualizations of its potentialities; for the exercise of the function is the exhibition of the thing's nature:

> What a thing is is always determined by its function: a thing really is itself when it can perform its function; an eye, for instance, when it can see. When a thing cannot do so it is that thing only in name, like a dead eye or one made of stone, just as a wooden saw is no more a saw than one in a picture.....They all [scil. natural things] are what they are in virtue of a certain power of action or passion.[2]

For since all originative sources are potencies, the nature of a thing as an originative source falls into the genus of potency;[3] and it is the nature of a thing which exhibits the thing to be what it is precisely in its natural functions, precisely in the processes whereby it achieves the good proper to it.[4]

Aristotle defines nature as "a source or cause of being moved and of being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily, in virtue of itself and not in virtue of a concomitant attribute."[5] But when he comes to the actual determination of what the principle of motion in the natural thing is, he finds that "nature" may be understood in more than a single sense.[6] Matter, indeed, was considered to be the nature of the thing by all those thinkers who posited elements of one sort or another, for matter is that out of which the natural object is made or of which it consists and that which persists in all changes. Aristotle, however, considers the nature of a thing to be primarily its form, "for a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it has attained to fulfillment than when it exists potentially,"[7] and the things that come to be and are by nature are not yet said to have their nature "unless they have their form or shape."[8] On the other hand, things are not strictly works of nature nor, indeed, of art if they are only potentially natural or artistic things; rather, matter can be called "nature" because it has the potency of receiving the form,[9] because, in other words, as a passive potency, it is a principle of change in natural substances.

The actuality, then, that is possessed by the natural being in virtue of which it is properly said to be natural or to have a nature is the form; and just as the actuality or the complete reality in general is the end or the good, so likewise is the form the end with respect to the natural substance which is composed of matter and form. For while the causes are four in number, matter, form, agent and end, in the case of things which cause motion by being themselves moved, form and agent and end coincide. The form is the efficient cause inasmuch as the natural being produces by virtue of

its nature or form an effect specifically the same as itself. It is, more important, the final cause since the actuality for the sake of which any natural thing exercises the functions proper to its active and passive potencies is the form itself either as the actualization of another's passive potency, considered from the point of view of the patient receiving the form, or as the actualization of its own active potency, considered from the point of view of the agent communicating the form.[10]

The major role of the form, then, is precisely the end or the good in respect of natural substances. The matter is the passive potency which receives its actuality from the form;[11] and the form, as giving actuality to the matter, is pre-eminently the good, for it is actual existence in the form at which matter may be said to aim.[12] The form, considered in its active potentiality, is the agent that efficiently initiates any change; but inasmuch as the final reason of its activity is to give actuality to the matter or, in general, to any other being having the capacity receptive of the form, the form is the good, which finally originates the movement and determines the limit of the process. That is why Aristotle says, concerning the distinction of the causes in respect of substance, that "while the efficient cause is sought in the case of genesis and destruction, the final cause is sought in the case of being also."[13] For the agency of the form is exercised only so long as the movement is incomplete; but when the process has reached its completion, the agency ceases and the end or the good for which the process has taken place is realized in the very being of the substance as a certain matter now having its form. That is the reason, likewise, that to the question "why" in physical inquiry the answer in regard to final cause,

"because it is better thus", must admit the restriction "not without qualification, but with reference to the essential nature in each case."[14] For although the form in general is the good of the being, and also the end of every motion, primarily it is the form as the nature of the thing to which the good of each is referred.

Because the form of the natural substance is its end and because the form is the end of every natural movement, Aristotle places nature in general in the class of causes that act for the sake of something. Chance and spontaneity, while they are likewise causes which act for the sake of something, do not, however, produce their results either always or for the most part in the same way. They are rather incidental causes of effects which might be brought about by intelligence or by nature in an invariable or almost invariable manner. Although they act for the sake of something, it is not the result which they actually produce for which they act. The tripod may have fallen in virtue of the natural tendency of its predominant heavy matter to move downward, but the fact that it fell on its feet in the position such as to serve for a seat is incidental to the end for which it fell; and this result is of the kind that could have come to pass by the action of an agent intending it. The man engaged in collecting subscriptions for a feast may go to the market-place for one of many possible reasons and, while there, chance to meet a friend from whom he solicits a subscription; and this result could have been the real object of his going to the market-place. The results, then, of chance and spontaneity arise from an external cause in the sense that the incidental cause of their coming about is not the cause by which they are normally or always effected. Nature, on the other hand, in

virtue of the fact that the natural substance acts in virtue of a principle within it and produces a result which is the proper and normal or invariable result for the sake of which it acts, is a cause which acts for an end per se and not incidentally.[15]

From the fact of relatively invariable results of natural action Aristotle argues that natural action is for the sake of the end produced and not the action of an incidental and hence indefinite cause, for the only sufficient reason for the achievement of such effects is that the end or good is attained by the natural and proper activity of the form actualizing an appropriate matter. Coincidence cannot account for the fact that, for example, the front teeth of animals are always slender and sharp for tearing food and the molars thick and dull for grinding it; for if the character of teeth were the result of chance or spontaneity and hence were not constituted as they are in view of the end for which they are fitted, they should neither always nor normally be of such character.[16] The same is true of any coming-to-be in nature, as Aristotle argues against Empedocles, "for the things which come-to-be by natural process all exhibit, in their coming-to-be, a uniformity either absolute or highly regular: while any exceptions -- any results which are in accordance neither with the invariable nor with the general rule -- are products of chance and luck. Then what is the cause determining that man comes-to-be from man, that wheat (instead of an olive) comes-to-be from wheat, either invariably or generally?.....The cause in question [scil. of the proportions of the element in natural bodies] is the essential nature of each thing -- not merely....'a mingling and a divorce of what has been mingled.'"[17] The coming-to-be of natural substances, then, is due to the nature

of each thing; and while the adherents of chance and spontaneity assign the excellence of each thing to the "mingling of elements", rather "it is this [scil. the nature] which is both 'the excellence' of each thing and its 'good'".[18]

The strict parallelism that Aristotle finds between the functions of art and nature provides another argument for the teleological activity of natural agents. In both art and nature the form of the product to be produced is that whereby the agent acts to embody the form in its appropriate matter. Just as man produces man and wheat produces wheat by having the form of man or wheat, so does health produce health and house produce house; for the medical art and the building art are precisely the form of health and the form of house in the soul of the artist. These forms, like the forms of the natural agents, are the active potencies whereby the artist causes the same specific form to be in the thing produced. In art, however, reasoning is involved, not on the part of the art itself, to be sure, but on the part of the artist. For the exercise of the art, it is required that before the actual exercise of the artistic functions, the artist decide upon the necessary dispositions of materials and the series of means, whether activities or instruments, that will cause the form to be in matter. When his deliberation reaches a point of action immediately within his power, he may begin the series that will result, if nothing hinders, in the end he has intended.[19] The series of steps to a completion wherein the end or the good is effected is the same in nature as in art, each preceding step for the sake of the next and all for the sake of the end at which the process reaches the good for which it was originated.[20] The series in nature is obvious in the work of

non-intelligent animals, for example, spiders, ants, and the like, and even in plants. This teleological view Aristotle finally returns to its speculative basis:

> If then it is both by nature and for an end that the swallow makes its nest and the spider its web, and plants grow leaves for the sake of the fruit and send their roots down (not up) for the sake of nourishment, it is plain that this kind of cause is operative in things which come to be and are by nature. And since 'nature' means two things, the matter and the form, of which the latter is the end, and since all the rest is for the sake of the end, the form must be the cause in the sense of 'that for the sake of which.'"[21]

It is a difficulty which arises from former physical theories why natural productions might not well be thought to be the result of necessity rather than teleological action. Necessity finds its own place in Aristotle's own view of nature, but it is only a hypothetical necessity arising from the part that matter plays in the constitution of natural substances, and it subserves the end. A house, for example, does not come to be because certain of its materials tend downward to form the foundation and certain others upward to form the roof. Although the materials and the natural activities attaching to their natures are necessary to the existence of the product by the very fact that it is a composite being, it is not because of them except as the matter that the product comes to be. A house exists for the purpose of sheltering, and for that end it comes to be. If, then, a house is to exist, the materials and a certain continuous succession of motions and productions must exist until the product for which they exist and are put into operation will be realized; for without these antecedents the end will not be reached. The same kind of necessity exists in nature; a man, for example, does not result necessarily from a certain disposition of matter or bodily parts and a

certain number of natural motions, but if a man is to exist, these must necessarily exist and produce the man. Thus Aristotle concludes his argument:

> What is necessary then, is necessary on a hypothesis; it is not a result necessarily determined by antecedents. Necessity is in the matter, while 'that for the sake of which' is in the definition.[22]

Aristotle divides natural substances into three kinds: the elements and their compounds, plants, and animals and their parts; for each of these is possessed of the internal principle required of things existing by nature.[23] To all of these kinds belong, in virtue of their forms or natures as the principle of their movements, proper functions and proper goods; the actuality at which each aims in its action is proportioned to the potentiality which each possesses by reason of its specific form. To the elements belong upward and downward movement in place. Movement of any kind, like the action of generation, is never fortuitous; there is no motion of a chance subject in a chance direction, but only from one contrary to the other or to an intermediate state. "Now, that which produces upward and downward movement," Aristotle argues, "is that which produces weight and lightness, and that which is moved is that which is potentially heavy or light, and the movement of each body to its own place is motion toward its own form."[24] It is only in the attainment of its proper place that the element has its own actuality. "Whenever," he illustrates, "air comes into being out of water, light out of heavy, it goes to the upper place. It is forthwith light: becoming is at an end, and in that place it has being. Obviously, then, it is a potentiality, which, in its passage to actuality, comes into that place and quantity and quality which belong to its actuality."[25] Thus, the proper form and end or good that belongs to the elements is accomplished in the place

proper to each, and their natural movements are aimed toward the place. Bodies compounded out of the elements[26] likewise have movements toward their place, but their movements are due to their relative lightness or heaviness arising from the relative proportions of their elementary constituents.[27]

When Aristotle turns to the genus of natural things possessed of life, the same causality of the form as end governs his conception of their activities. Living substances in nature are likewise composites of matter and form, namely, of body and soul; and the soul is "the first grade of actuality of a natural body having life potentially in it."[28] The soul, in other words, is the essence or formal cause of the body; for the very being of the living bodies is to live and "of their being and their living the soul in them is the cause or source,"[29] and the actuality of any potency in the natural order is the form.[30] But Nature acts for the sake of the end; and just as the actuality is the end or good of the potentiality, so the soul as the actuality of the body potential to the soul is the end or good of the body.[31]

It is from the point of view of the end that Aristotle can thus treat of the kinds of soul which he distinguishes among living things. The lowest psychic power, which belongs to all living things of the earth, "may be described as that which tends to maintain whatever has this power in it of continuing such as it was,"[32] but "since it is right to call things after the ends they realize, and the end of this soul is to generate another being like that in which it is, the first soul ought to be named the reproductive soul."[33] Thus, it is the function of this soul to realize the form of the living thing in matter by the exercise of its active potentiality for gener-

ating; and it is only by reference to this good, namely, the thing generated, that the reproductive soul is, "for that which can make and generate, considered simply as such, exists only in relation to what is made and generated."[34]

So likewise, the teleology appears in connection with living things which have the power of local movement. Since Nature does nothing in vain, animals must have the power of sensation, must possess the next order of soul, namely, the sensitive; for without it they should be incapable of reaching the end which Nature has intended for them, that is, to rise to the complete realization of their form in matter and to the exercise of their potentialities. It follows, by the same token, that the senses should subserve this good of the animal; and thus they contribute both to the being and the well-being of the animal.[35]

That Nature acts for a good is the fundamental conception pervading the entire physical system that Aristotle has left; and this view he himself summarizes explicitly with regard to biological science:

> At the beginning of the inquiry we must postulate the principles we are accustomed constantly to use for our scientific investigation of nature, that is we must take for granted principles of this universal character which appear in all Nature's work. Of these one is that Nature creates nothing without a purpose, but always the best possible in each kind of living creature by reference to its essential constitution. Accordingly if one way is better than another that is the way of Nature.[36]

Chapter V

The Ethical Good

While man possesses in common with the elements, plants, and brutes the functions proper to them in virtue of the fact that he shares their natures, he presents a vastly different problem to Aristotle. For man possesses not the mere life of the plants and of the lower animals, but life to a higher degree. Alone he has a god-like nature whose function it is to think and be wise, and "of all living beings with which we are acquainted man alone partakes of the divine, or at any rate partakes of it in a fuller measure than the rest."[1] For man is differentiated from other natural living substances by the fact that he possesses the rational power of soul which is more divine than the reproductive or sensitive and seems, unlike them, to be indestructible and separable from body. If a soul has an action or passion proper to itself alone[2] or if a power of the soul is not the actuality of any bodily part,[3] it is separable from the body; and, conversely, if it has no action or passion so proper to it or if it is the actuality of a bodily part, separate existence is impossible to it. But in the operations of the intellective soul of knowing in an intellectual manner Aristotle finds the requirement for separate existence: "Insofar as the realities it knows are capable of being separated from their matter, so it is also with the powers of the mind."[4] The intellective soul, then, is an independent substance incapable of destruction, and for this reason it is more divine than all other souls, differing from them precisely as the eternal differs from the perishable.[5] More precisely, it is the acting intellect, whose essential

nature is activity, which is separable, impassive, unmixed; "this alone is immortal and eternal."[6]

Thus while man shares in the goods of the lower substances, the good proper to man must be a higher good corresponding with man's higher nature. Even, however, if the good for man is a more divine good than that of any other natural being, it is with the conviction that reason and order exists in the whole of nature that governs Aristotle's inquiry into the ethical good. There must be a chief good for man, a perfect good which he desires for its own sake alone and for which he desires everything else; otherwise the series of goods desirable for the sake of something else would be infinite, and man's desire would be a vanity.[7] This good, then, will be a good achievable by action. Aristotle rejects the Platonic subsistent Idea of the Good, as far as its contribution to the moral action of man is concerned, precisely on the ground that even if it exist separately and independently of all goods that are the object of human desire, it would be beyond human attainment. Moreover, even if it were considered as a kind of pattern by which man could be supposed to be guided in his attainment of actually achievable goods, it is manifestly useless in this regard, as the actual procedure of the arts attests, and it is difficult to see how it is possible that the knowledge of a universal Good could be an aid to actions aiming at particular goods.[8]

The good at which man aims must be the most final of all ends of action; it must be final without qualification, that is, in no case desirable for the sake of something else, but always that good for which men do whatever they do; in short, it is the good under which all goods achievable by

man are subserved. It is, moreover, the self-sufficient good such that alone it makes human life desirable and lacking no good.[9] To say that this good is happiness Aristotle finds to be platitudinous. The question still remains to determine what the nature of the summum bonum is; and it is by turning to the function peculiar to man that he gives his account of happiness, just as in all things which have undergone his scrutiny he has sought the good in their function.

> Just as for a flute-player, a sculptor, or any artist, and, in general, for all things that have a function or activity, the good and the 'well' is thought to reside in the function, so would it seem to be for man, if he has a function. Have the carpenter, then, and the tanner certain functions and activities, and has man none? Is he born without a function? Or as eye, hand, foot, and in general each of the parts evidently has a function, may one lay it down that man similarly has a function apart from all these?[10]

The peculiar function of man is a certain kind of life, since he is a living being, but neither the life of nutrition and growth, for this is common to all living bodies, nor of perception, for this is common to all animals. Hence, it is "an active life of the element that has a rational principle." But, "having a rational principle" is applied to the appetitive soul which is said to "have a rational principle" in the sense of being obedient to one, and to the rational soul which possesses one and exercises thought. And the "life of the rational element" can be understood as the first actuality or the second actuality.[11] The function proper to man, Aristotle decides, is the proper activity of the rational soul. But since the rational potency is capable of contrary effects,[12] the good for man will reside only in an eminent exercise of his function in respect of goodness. If, then, an action is well performed by the exercise of the human function in accordance with the

good appropriate to the function, Aristotle concludes, the summum bonum is the "activity of soul in accordance with virtue, and if there are more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete" exercised "in a complete life."[13]

If happiness, then, is an activity in accordance with virtue of the soul, Aristotle finds it necessary to determine the nature of virtue by reference to the soul itself. The human soul Aristotle divides into the irrational and that which in the primary sense is said to have a rational principle. The former is divided into the vegetative and that which in a secondary sense is said to have a rational principle, inasmuch as the appetitive soul and, in general, the "desiring element" is seen to be obedient to a rational principle in the continent or temperate or brave man, although in the incontinent it is allowed to pursue its natural tendency contrary to the rational principle. As the irrational element can thus be distinguished from the point of view of its own nature as opposed to the rational principle and from that of its obedience to the rational, so, Aristotle finds, can the element having a rational principle primarily be said to be twofold, "one subdivision having it in the strict sense and in itself, and the other having a tendency to obey as one does one's father."[14] In consequence, the virtues corresponding to the parts distinguished in the rational soul can be divided into two kinds, intellectual and moral.

In respect of the moral virtues, Aristotle determines their genus as states of character. Three kinds of things are found in the soul: passions, faculties, and such states. But while men are called good or bad and are praised or blamed because of their virtues and vices, they are not so

called nor is praise or blame imputed of them by reason of either their passions or their faculties; and while virtues and vices involve choice and are acquired by action, passions are involuntary and faculties are in man by nature. States of character, on the other hand, are in man as those things by which he stands well or badly with reference to his passions and actions. The virtue of anything whatever is that whereby the thing is placed in good condition and whereby it exercises its function in an eminent degree. Just as the proper excellence of an eye or of a horse makes the eye itself to be good and to see well and the horse to be itself good and to be good at its functions of running, carrying its rider, and awaiting the enemy in battle, so the moral virtue of man is a state of the human character that makes him morally good and that makes him perform his moral actions and suffer his passions well. But as in works of art, excess and defect destroy the goodness of the artefact, so in human passions and actions; a man may be ill disposed toward his passions by feeling them too much or too little or he may, in regard to his actions, do too much or too little. Specifically, then, moral virtue lies in the mean between the vices of excess and defect. Aristotle sums up the nature of moral virtue thus: "Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it."[15]

It is in the determination of the rational principle or right rule which prescribes the intermediate to be chosen that Aristotle is led into a discussion of the intellectual virtues. Again from the point of view of the soul he begins and divides the "part which grasps a rule or rational

principle" according to the kinds of things with which it deals, into the scientific or contemplative which deals with invariable things and the calculative or deliberative which deals with the variable. The best state of each of those parts is the virtue of each, and the virtue of each is relative to its proper function; but the best state of anything intellectual is truth. Although intellect as such does not relate to action, the best state of practical intellect which aims at the end of good action is truth in agreement with right desire; for choice, which is the efficient cause of moral action, can be called either "desiderative reason or ratiocinative desire." The proper function of both intellectual parts, is, therefore, truth; and the states whereby each will attain the truth proper to it are the virtues of each.[16]

The state of soul by virtue of which there is truth in the practical intellect insofar as the right action of man is concerned Aristotle calls practical wisdom, which, being neither a state of the contemplative intellect nor the state which governs making, is a "true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man."[17] This state involves the ability to deliberate well about what conduces to the good life in general; it calculates with respect to the means whereby the end of moral actions is attained, and this end is the good action itself.[18] It is thus relative to the sphere of moral action wherein it considers not only the universal character of human action but particular goods in view of the highest good and the particular acts which must be done to achieve them;[19] and since its end is what ought to be done and what ought not, its office is to issue commands over the man in the performance of virtuous deeds.[20] It is

not, then, identical with virtue, but in the good man it is necessarily coincident with virtue; for Aristotle says, "the work of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral virtue; for virtue makes us aim at the right mark, and practical wisdom makes us take the right means."[21] Thus, it is practical wisdom which formulates the practical syllogism governing the moral actions of the virtuous man.[22] As knowing the end at which the virtue aims and prescribing the means whereby the good is achieved, there can be no virtue where there is not practical wisdom. For while the natural faculty of cleverness, which enables the human agent to aim at and hit the mark, without acquired virtue to set the right mark may be employed toward a bad end, and while natural virtue without the direction of practical reason is blind and may lead man astray, the acquired moral virtues and practical wisdom alone guarantees that the agent do virtuous actions out of established habit and good choice as the man who is without qualification good would do them. It is, therefore, evident that choice will not be right unless practical wisdom and moral virtue are present in the agent; and it is Aristotle's conclusion that "it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral virtue."[23]

But the virtue of the contemplative reason as well enters into Aristotle's consideration of the highest good for man. Philosophic wisdom is the most finished form of knowledge; for it is a combination of intuitive reason, which is the state of mind which apprehends first principles,[24] and of scientific knowledge, which is the state or capacity to demonstrate and the mental possession of what cannot be otherwise than as it is, namely,

necessary and therefore eternal things.[25] It is, moreover, scientific knowledge in its most complete form inasmuch as it is knowledge of those objects which are by their nature the highest; and thus philosophic wisdom transcends even practical wisdom which in the first place is concerned with man, who, though he is the best of animals, is still less divine than, for example, the heavenly bodies, and which, furthermore, is concerned not alone with universals but with particulars also.[26] While it appears, then, that philosophic wisdom has no connection with those things that will conduce to man's happiness in so much as its concern is not for the things which can be achieved by man but for what is eternally what it is,[27] Aristotle points out that, in the first place, even if it could produce nothing, it is worthy of choice as a virtue of the rational soul.[28] But, furthermore, philosophic wisdom does produce happiness, not as a productive art in the way that medicine produces health, but as the form of health produces health in the healthy body; for Aristotle says, "being a part of virtue entire, by being possessed and by actualizing itself it makes a man happy."[29]

It is this conception of the contemplative activity of the soul which forms a second view of the nature of the highest good for man.[30] "If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue," he says, reiterating what he has already established,[31] "it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be that of the best thing in us. Whether it be reason or something else that is this element which is thought to be our natural ruler and guide and to take thought of things noble and divine, whether it be itself also divine or only the most divine element in us, the activity of this in accordance with its proper virtue will be perfect

happiness."[32] This activity, he decides, is that of the contemplative soul, and the truly happy life is the contemplative life. For it is the contemplative activity which most eminently possesses the perfections characteristic of man's highest good. It is the activity of the best element of human nature exercised on the best knowable objects; it is the most continuous, for man can contemplate truth more continously than he can do anything; it is completed by the purest and most enduring pleasures;[33] it is self-sufficient to the extent that the philosopher in contemplating truth is, of all men, least needful of the company of other men or of an abundance of worldly goods; it is most of all loved for its own sake since nothing is produced by contemplation; and it is dependent on leisure and peace for its best functioning. If these attributes belong to contemplation and likewise all the other attributes ascribed to the activity of the happy man who is supremely happy, it follows that reason exercised in the contemplative activity and allowed a complete term of life is the complete happiness for man.[34]

Yet Aristotle, having achieved the end of this inquiry, goes on to say:

> But such a life would be too high for man; for it is not in so far as he is man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him; and by so much as this is superior to our composite nature is its activity superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue. If reason is divine, then, in comparison with man, the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life. But we must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and being mortal, of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything. This would seem, too, to be each man himself, since it is the authoritative and better part of him. It would be

> strange, then, if he were to choose not the life of his self but that of something else. And what we said before will apply now; that which is proper to each thing is by nature best and most pleasant for each thing; for man, therefore, the life according to reason is best and pleasantest, since reason more than anything else is man. This life therefore is also the happiest.[35]

This being true, only secondarily happy is the life of moral virtue and practical wisdom; but because man is a man, because he has passions arising from the lower element of his composite nature, because he needs health, food, and other attention for the maintenance of his whole nature, and because he belongs to the society of men, the activities of the morally virtuous life befit his composite nature and his human estate. But happiness belongs in the truest, highest, and most divine sense to the philosopher; the happiness without qualification good for man is the contemplation of truth.[36]

Chapter VI

The Ultimate Good

The concept of analogy which Aristotle employs to explain the fact that "good" is predicated of the various categories of being serves to unify goods in the logical order. Ontologically, the unification of goods is achieved by the conception of actuality or the complete reality as the good which is aimed at in any category; and the same proportion that exists among the categories of both being and good extends likewise to the actual beings that fall into them. In other words, substance, prior in being to all the other categories, is prior also from the standpoint of good and is that to which both the being and the good of the others are referred. But another unity of goods lies in the order of substances; for while Aristotle focuses his attention on the good proper to each substance in the natural order, he does not allow that the universe as he has painted it with its various distinct goods finds its sufficient reason for attaining the good in the various genera of beings that it comprises. Matter and form, potency and actuality as such give only a proximate explanation of the activity of all things in quest of their own good; the ultimate reason lies in a higher actuality, an eternal unmoved substance from which the final motivation of all things is derived.

Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of substances comprising the whole of reality: the movable and perishable sensible substances of the sublunary world, the movable and imperishable sensible substances of the heavens, and the immovable and imperishable non-sensible substance.[1] The exist-

ence of an eternal and unmoved substance he asserts to be necessary if there is to be any explanation of movement in the universe of sensible things. Motion itself is eternal and continuous because time, which is either "the same thing as movement or an attribute of movement,"[2] is eternal. For time cannot exist or even be thought of apart from the moment whose character it is to be a kind of middle-point of time, both the end of past time and the beginning of future time; hence no moment can exist before which there was not time or after which there will be no time.[3] But Aristotle demands an explanation of the perpetuity of motion. As far as the first class of substances is concerned, the sensible substances of the sub-lunary world, the inquiry deals with the kind of beings whose nature is such that they may possibly not be; for the fact of generation and destruction in physical phenomena implies that this substance at one time <u>is</u> and at another time <u>is not</u>, and hence coming-to-be and passing away belong to the things that "can be-and-not-be."[4]

The inquiry into the cause of perpetual coming-to-be of this kind of substance necessitates, however, a distinction of the meanings that may be attached to "cause" in this connection; for "cause" may refer to the matter, the form, or the "third originative source."[5] But insofar as matter and form are concerned, while they are necessary for an adequate explanation of motion, they fail sufficiently to account for generation.[6] An agent is necessary to explain the actualization of matter by form; and even if the latter is taken as the proximate agent which acts to inform matter, every last mover and every last agent, namely, that which is proximate to the moved or effected thing, imparts motion or acts by being itself moved or by itself

suffering action; it is, in other words, a moved mover or an affected agent, and needs a further mover or agent to explain its own causal efficacy.[7]

What is necessary, then, is the third originative cause which, in one sense of the term,[8] is the second class of substances, the sensible substances of the heavens whose movement is primary, one, simple, and eternal, that is, continuous locomotion in a circle.[9] In respect of generation and corruption in the sub-lunary world the cause is the motion imparted by the combination of the motion of the fixed stars and the motion of the sun such that the sun moving in an ecliptic path resulting from the motion proper to it and the motion imparted to it by the first heaven causes the class of things which may-or-may-not-be to come-to-be and pass-away.[10]

But the eternal motion of the outer sphere and the sun is not yet enough; there is required another originative source to explain the perpetuity of motion of these imperishable things. For if the first heaven is eternally moved, it requires a mover. Thus, Aristotle argues: "There is therefore also something which moves it. And since that which is mover and moved is intermediate, there is something which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality."[11] For in any series of motions the causal virtue exercised by the last and the intermediate movers is derived from the causality imparted by the first mover which, in respect to the movement in question, must be itself unmoved.[12] But it is only the final cause or the good whose causality is that of an unmoved mover, and Aristotle concludes that the unmoved mover which is the principle upon which the heavens and the world of nature depend is the good at which all things aim. As the final cause it produces motion, not by being moved as do the other

causes, but by being loved.[13] It is not any or every final cause which will thus explain the tendency toward the good in all things, but only the eternal and unmoved good which Aristotle calls God. For every other good and, in fact, all other goods collectively are such that they may perish and hence fail to account for the eternity and continuity of the motion of which they are supposed to be the principles. As Aristotle argues the point:

> The fact that some things become and others perish, and that this is so continuously, cannot be caused by any of those things that, though they are unmoved, do not always exist: nor again can it be caused by any of those which move certain particular things, while others move other things. The eternity and continuity of the process cannot be caused either by any one of them singly or by the sum of them, because this causal relation must be eternal and necessary, whereas the sum of these movents is infinite and they do not all exist together. It is clear, then, that though there may be countless instances of the perishing of some principles that are unmoved but impart motion, and though many things that move themselves perish and are succeeded by others that come into being, and though one thing that is unmoved moves one thing while another moves another, nevertheless there is something that comprehends them all, and that as something apart from each one of them, and this it is that is the cause of the fact that some things are and others are not and of the continuous process of change: and this causes the motion of the other movents, while they are the causes of the motion of other things. Motion, then, being eternal, the first movent....will be eternal also.[14]

It is this good at which all things aim and in their striving account for the perpetual coming-to-be for their good. Having advanced the theory that the motion of the first heaven and the sun explain continuous generation and corruption, Aristotle turns to the unmoved mover for the final explanation and says:

> And this continuity has a sufficient reason on our theory. For in all things, as we affirm, Nature always strives after'the better.' Now 'being' (we have explained else-

> where the exact variety of meanings we recognize in this term) is better than 'not-being': but not all things can possess 'being', since they are too far removed from the 'originative source.' God therefore adopted the remaining alternative, and fulfilled the perfection of the universe by making coming-to-be uninterrupted: for the greatest possible coherence would thus be secured to existence, because that 'coming-to-be should itself come-to-be perpetually' is the closest approximation to eternal being.[15]

No less evident is the same view when Aristotle turns to the generative soul in living beings:

> The acts in which it manifests itself are reproduction and the use of food-reproduction, I say, because for any living thing that has reached its normal development and which is unmutilated, and whose mode of generation is not spontaneous, the most natural act is the production of another like itself, an animal producing an animal, a plant a plant, in order that, as far as its nature allows, it may partake in the eternal and divine.....Since then no living thing is able to partake in what is eternal and divine by uninterrupted continuance (for nothing perishable can for ever remain one and the same), it tries to achieve that end in the only way possible to it, and success is possible in varying degrees; so it remains not indeed as the self-same individual but continues its existence in something <u>like</u> itself -- not numerically but specifically one.[16]

And, again, as to the mode of this imitation of the divine in the case of animal generation he sums up his position:

> Now (1) some existing things are eternal and divine whilst others admit of both existence and non-existence. But (2) that which is noble and divine is always, in virtue of its own nature, the cause of the better in such things as admit of being better or worse, and what is not eternal does admit of existence and non-existence, and can partake in the better and the worse. And (3) soul is better than body, and the living, having soul, is thereby better than the lifeless which has none, and being is better than not-being, living than not living. These, then, are the reasons of the generation of animals. For since it is impossible that such a class of things as animals should be of an eternal nature, therefore that which comes into being is eternal in the only way possible. Now it is impossible for it to be eternal as an individual (though of course the real essence of things

> is in the individual) -- were it such it would be eternal -- but it is possible for it as a species.[17]

Thus it appears that the universal aiming at the final good which is the unmoved mover is at once the aiming of every being at its own good; the striving for participation in the eternal and divine good is precisely only another side of the striving of each thing for the actuality or the good proper to its own potentiality. When Aristotle says that "not all things can possess 'being' since they are too far removed from the 'originative source'," he is stating, though in a somewhat infrequent mode of expression, the exact difference he finds between substances which are imperishable, hence eternal and divine, and substances which are perishable. It is the latter which are contingent and hence only potentially existent, and on this basis Aristotle finds himself able to argue the priority of actuality over potentiality "in a stricter sense" even than on the basis of actuality as the end of potentiality.[18] For the eternal thing is in respect of its substance imperishable and consequently is in the full sense not potential to not being, whereas the potentiality of the perishable thing affects its very substance.[19] In consequence, this kind of substance can never attain to the "being" which characterizes the things which are eternal; for the degree in which they are actual, always implying the potentiality for substantial destruction, they are distantly removed from the degree in which the eternal "originative sources" are actual. The degrees, then, in which they may imitate the actuality of the eternal substance is proportioned to the measure in which they realize the potentialities proper to their own natures, and this imitation is consequently the realization of their good by the exercise of their proper

functions. The "being" or the actuality for which all things strive, the good at which they aim, can thus be realized in only an approximation to the eternal actuality and the eternal good. The ultimate actuality and the ultimate good is eternal; but the eternity which it is possible for natural substances to achieve is only the eternity of the species for the very reason that individually each natural is one "whose 'substance' is such that it is essentially capable of not-being."[20]

The case is perhaps less clear with regard to the highest good at which all men aim, but in last analysis it is nonetheless the same. The actualization of man's highest potency is the activity of the contemplative life, and this above all is the exercise of the intellectual function proper to man. It is no less an approximation to the eternal actuality; and just as all other beings strive toward the eternal good by the exercise of their proper functions, so must man, as far as he can, strive toward immortality by "straining every nerve" to live in accordance with the divinest element in him, his contemplative soul by "thinking and being wise." For this is the activity of God,[21] the most blessed and happiest of all things, who has no need of moral virtue since the circumstances of virtuous action are trivial and unworthy of divinity. "The activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative; and of human activities, therefore, that which most akin to this must be most of the nature of happiness."[22] And the life of the contemplative man is thus the highest imitation of God possible to the perishable beings of the earth:

> He who exercises his reason and cultivates it seems to be both in the best state of mind and most dear to the gods. For if the gods have any care for human affairs, as they

> are thought to have, it would be reasonable both that they should delight in that which is best and most akin to them (i.e. reason) and that they should reward those who love and honor this most, as caring for the things that are dear to them and acting both rightly and nobly. And that all these attributes belong most of all to the philosopher is manifest. He, therefore, is the dearest to the gods. And he who is that will presumably be also the happiest; so that in this way too the philosopher will more than any other be happy.[23]

It is thus that in the first and eternal good Aristotle unifies the striving of every individual being in the universe, for it is in the striving to realize the perfection of their own natures that the necessary and eternal divinity is their aim. But the unity of the goods under the unmoved mover implies a further unity of goods among themselves, for Aristotle feels at least that the desire of all things for the highest good conduces to the good of the ensemble of natural things:

> We must consider also in which of two ways the nature of the universe contains the good and the highest good, whether as something separate and by itself, or as the order of the parts. Probably in both ways, as an army does; for its good is found both in its order and in its leader, and more in the latter; for he does not depend on the order but it depends on him. And all things are ordered together somehow, but not all alike, -- both fishes and fowls and plants; and the world is not such that one thing has nothing to do with another, but they are connected. For all are ordered together to one end, but it is as in a house, where the freemen are least at liberty to act at random, but all things or most things are already ordained for them, while the slaves and the animals do little for the common good, and for the most part live at random; for this is the sort of principle that constitutes the nature of each. I mean, for instance, that all must at least come to be dissolved into their elements, and there are other functions similarly in which all share for the good of the whole.[24]

Only in the last good, then, does Aristotle find reason in the whole universe, in the order manifested in the aiming of all things at their proper

and proximate actuality or good and in the adaptation of beings to one another. Even if it is only the fact that the corruption of one substance is the generation of another,[25] the order inherent in the nature of things is apparent. Thus it is that the end and the good for which all beings are destined to strive furnishes the last answer to the problem of the good in the philosophy of Aristotle.

Notes and References

All quotations and references are from The Works of Aristotle Translated into English under the editorship of W. D. Ross, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Chapter I

1. Ethica Nichomachea I, i, 1094 a 1-3.

2. Categoriae v. 2 a 11-12.

3. ib. 2 a 34.

4. ib. 2 a 13-18.

5. ib. 2 b 15-16. Aristotle does not restrict the characteristic of individuality to primary substances alone, for such things as a certain point of grammatical knowledge in the mind or a certain whiteness inhering in its proper subject are likewise individual. Categ. ii, 1 a 9, 25-29. But these individual qualifications enter the Categoriae apparently only to fill out the scheme of things present in or not present in a subject and or predicable of or not predicable of a subject. Since they are singulars they are henceforth neglected. Their individuality causes no confusion with substances inasmuch as they require a subject.

6. Metaphysica VII, xiii, 1038 b 8-14. Roman numerals will be used throughout to designate the books of the Metaphysics, counting as book II such that there will be fourteen books in all.

7. ib. b 15.

8. ib. b 36-37. Even secondary substances, or the species and genera, indicate a quality, but "with reference to a substance." Categ. v, 3 b 19. cf. Met. III, vi, 1003 a 7-8; De Sophisticis Elenchis xxii, 178 b 38-179 a 10. Aristotle devotes the remainder of Met. VII, xiii to further arguments from the point of view of making species or genera primary substances, with the Platonic viewpoint in mind explicitly and VII, xiv entire to the criticism of the Ideas in light of them. In sum, they come to the argument of Met. III, vi, 1003 a 9-11: "If we are to allow that a common predicate is a 'this' and a single thing, Socrates will be several animals -- himself and 'man' and 'animal', if each of these indicates a 'this' and a single thing." But since the Good would not be considered as a species or genus of substance, these arguments are not to our purpose.

9. Met. VII, xvi, 1040 b 23-27. And if being and unity are not sub-

stances by reason of their universality, a fortiori neither is any other universal; for being and unity, as "attributes that follow everything," are the most universal of terms.

10. Met. I, ix, 990 b 30.

11. Met. VII, xvi, 1040 b 28. cf. XIII, x, 1086 b 16-19: "If we do not suppose substances to be separate, and in the way in which individual things are said to be separate, we shall destroy substance in the sense in which we understand 'substance'." Aristotle says that the Platonists "gave separate existence to these universally predicated substances, so that it followed that universals and individuals were almost the same sort of thing." XIII, ix, 1086 b 10-11.

12. Met. I, ix, 991 b 1-3.

13. To the argument that a universal indicates only a "such" (vide p. 50, n. 8) Aristotle adds that otherwise, that is, if it were taken to indicate a "this", "many difficulties follow and especially the 'third man'." 1039 a 2. The reference is to the usual objections to the "one-over-many" procedure of the Platonic dialectic and to his own summary criticism in Met. I, ix.

14. This is Aristotle's thought not in so many words in Categ. v., where, as regards secondary substance, the species is considered to be "more truly substantial" than the genus for the reason that the latter, being too general, is further removed from the primary substance. 2 b 6-14.

15. Categ. v, 2 b 28-37.

Chapter II

1. Aristotle notes parenthetically, "which is the reason why they did not maintain the existence of an Idea embracing all numbers." Cf. Met. XIII, vi, on the various forms the number theory took in the Academy. The reason is obscure; but in his short history of the origin of the theory of the Ideas Aristotle points out that while Socrates for the first time employed induction from particulars to a universal, Plato, with his Heraclitean distrust of changing sensible things, gave separate existence to"the universals or the definitions" of Socrates, so that it followed for him "almost by the same argument" that there was a subsistent one-over-many not only of the ethical concepts of Socrates but of all things spoken of universally in which the individuals were said to participate. He notes that "participation" is only another name for the Pythagorean "imitation of numbers" and that while the Pythagoreans made all things numbers, Plato made his entities separate because

of "his inquiry in the region of definitions" (Met. I, vi, 987 b 32) and, with reference to the Platonist in general, because of the "abstract character of their inquiry." (Met. XII, i, 1069 a 28) It would seem, then, that the character of definitions which the universals possessed was the reason why the Platonists would not admit priority and posteriority in the predication of the substantialized Ideas, for the definition is always univocal. The writer of the Eudemian Ethics is more explicit; he prefaces his criticism of the Platonic Good with the remark that a discussion of the Ideas belongs for the most part to logical inquiry because it involves the relationship of the universal term and the individuals of which it is predicated. (I, viii, 1217 b 16-19) The burden of the criticism in both works is, consequently, from the standpoint of predication.

2. Aristotle uses for the purposes of illustration only the categories of substance and relation inasmuch as relation provides him with the most obvious example of posterior being. Relation is, he remarks parenthetically here, "like an accident and offshoot of being." 1096 a 12. Elsewhere he says more emphatically, apropos to the indefinite dyad of the great and the small, "what is relative is least of all things a kind of entity or substance, and is posterior to quantity and quality." Cf. Met. XIV, i, 1088 a 22-23, where substance, quantity, quality, and relation are taken apparently as exhaustive of the categories.

3. Eth. Nic. I, vi, 1096 a 17-29. Aristotle adds other criticisms which do not concern us here: that a single idea of the Good would necessitate a single science of the good; that "good-in-itself" and "this good" would not be different in the respect that they are good; that the eternity of the good is not argument for its betterness; that, insofar as the ethical good is concerned, the Ideal Good would not be achievable; and that, insofar as the actual procedure of the sciences is concerned, neither do they regard it as a pattern to aid them in achieving their actually attainable goods, which is an improbable state of affairs if such a pattern does exist, nor does it seem probable that it should be an aid since they are concerned with particulars. He also answers a supposed distinction counter to his criticism, i.e. that goods are either those pursued for their own sake or those pursued as useful to them; for it is evident that even those goods which are commonly pursued for their own sake differ in respect of their goodness and hence could not fall into a single class of whose individuals good would be univocally predicated, and that if the Idea of the Good is alone good per se, it would be empty, that is, it could contribute nothing to particular goods. 1096 a 29-1097 a 14.

4. Ib. 1096 a 11.

5. Ib. 1096 b 27-31.

6. Aristotle chooses "quality" as exemplifying the likeness.

7. Cf. Categ. i, 1 a 1-15 on univocal and equivocal names.

8. Met. IV, ii, 1003 b 6-10; cf. VII, i, 1028 a 9-b 2; iv, 1030 a 21-27, a 33-b 3; IV, 1003 a 32-b 6; for the enumeration of the categories cf. V, vii, 1017 a 23-30; Categ. ii-ix.

9. Not univocally, as his criticism of Plato has indicated (vide supra, pp. 5-6, nor equivocally because it does not belong to things "which chance to have the same name." vide supra, p. 6.)

Chapter III

1. Met. I, iii, 983 a 32.

2. Ib. vii, 988 b 6.

3. Ib. ix, 992 a 30.

4. Met. V, xvii, 1022 a 8. Cf. Physica II, ii, 194 a 30-33, where he criticises the pun on "end", "for not every stage that is last claims to be an end, but only that which is best." Cf. also Met. V, xvi, 1021 b 28.

5. It was because thinkers could not entrust the goodness and beauty which things manifest in their being and becoming to matter or to chance and spontaneity that they were at length "forced by the truth itself" to inquire into some cause other than the material. Met. I, iii, 984 b 8-15. On chance and spontaneity, vide infra, pp. 24-25.

6. Cf. Met. V, i "Beginning". Here Aristotle calls the final cause a "beginning", for "the good and the beautiful are the beginning both of the knowledge and of the movement of many things." 1013 a 23. He does not say the movement of all things, for he keeps in mind the movements initiated by chance and spontaneity of which the good, as the result aimed at, cannot be called the beginning.

7. Met. V, xvi, 1021 b 24.

8. Ib. ii, 1013 b 26-27.

9. Phys. II, iii, 195 a 23-25.

10. Met. I, ii, 982 b 4-10.

11. Eth. Nic. I, ii, 1094 a 27-b 11.

12. Ib. 1094 a 10-15. Cf. also Phys. II, ii, 194 a 38-b 8.

13. Met. III, ii, 996 b 1-12

14. Met. III, ii, 996 a 22-28. The same argument is repeated in XI, i, 1059 a 35-39 where it is reiterated that the final cause or the nature of the good is found "in the field of action and movement," and that it is the nature of the end to be a first mover whereas "in the case of things unmovable there is nothing that moved them first."

15. Met. I, ix, 990 b 1-9; 992 a 28.

16. Ib. 991 a 19-21.

17. Met. V, xxiv.

18. Met. I, ix, 991 a 21-26.

19. Ib. 992 a 24-26.

20. "The proximate principle of all things are the 'this' which is proximate in actuality, and another which is proximate in potentiality. The universal causes, then, of which we spoke [scil. matter form, privation, and agent] do not exist. For in regard to the last mentioned cause it is the individual which is the originative principle of the individuals. For while man is the originative principle of man universally, there is no universal man, but Peleus is the originative principle of Achilles, and your father of you, and this particular b of this particular ba, though b in general is the originative principle of ba taken without qualification....and those causes of things in the same species are different, not in species, but in the sense that the causes of different individuals are different, your matter and form and moving cause being different from mine." Met. XII, v, 1071 a 18-29. This is not explicitly an argument against the Platonists, but its implications are relevant.

21. In regard to things said to share in Ideas, cf. Met. I, ix, 991 b 3-9; in regard to substances, Met. VII, iii, 1033 b 25-1034 a 8; in regard to natural objects, Met. XII, iii, 1070 a 18-30; in regard to things that come-to-be, cf. De Generatione et Corruptione II, ix, 335 b 10-15, 18-24.

22. Aristotle here merely points out that "this argument, which first Anaxagoras and later Eudoxus and certain others used, is very easily upset; for it is not difficult to collect many insuperable objections to such a view." Met. I, ix, 991 a 16-18.

A "composition" in the sense in which Aristotle uses the term to

describe the Anaxagorean theory of the unity of a subject and its qualification is, loosely speaking, a mixture. To be a composition the component parts must be actually present in the whole in their own identity and separable from the whole. This is the characteristic of the homoeomeries, although Aristotle notes that Anaxagoras held that complete separation will not take place. But he says in criticism: "The statement that complete separation will never take place is correct enough, though Anaxagoras is not fully aware of what it means. For affectations are indeed inseparable. If then colors and states had entered into the mixture, and if separation took place, there would be a 'white' or a 'healthy' which was nothing but white or healthy, i.e. was not the predicate of a subject." Phys. I, iv, 188 a 5-9. That Aristotle would consider this criticism valid enough against any theory which would place the Ideas in things by way of composition is clear.

23. Vide supra, p. 10.So Aristotle goes on to say that the "modern thinkers" have identified mathematics with philosophy -- for the reason, no doubt, that there is no final cause among mathematical entities inasmuch as there is no motion.

24. Met. XII, x, 1075 a 38-39.

25. Met. I, vii, 988 b 6-16.

26. For incidental causality, cf. Met. V, ii, 1013 b 34-1014 a 6.

27. Met. XII, x, 1075 b 18-19. Although Aristotle mentions only a "superior principle", we infer from the context, i.e. the summary examination of the role of the good in other philosophers, that he means the final cause. It is not very likely that he would allow the proximate agent at least to be superior to the proximate form in any causality, and he can hardly be unaware of the transcendent character given to the Idea of the Good by Plato; he must, therefore, have in mind a principle superior even to the Good in its causality. For the point of the argument is that even if the Platonists posit the Good as a principle of the participating and the coming-to-participate of things in the Ideas, the Good is no less an Idea than the others and, in this much at least, is not superior to them in the mode of causality which the Ideas are said to exercise. It would be required, then, that a superior principle explain why things that are called good participate and come-to-participate in the Good.

28. Met. IX, i, 1046 a 11-12.

29. Met. V, xii, 1019 a 15-20.

30. Met. IX, i, 1046 a 4-28. Aristotle likewise distinguishes between

rational and non-rational potencies of acting. Rational potencies belong only to those living beings which are possessed of the rational part of the soul, whereas non-rational potencies belong also to non-living things which lack the rational soul. ii, 1046 a 37-b 3. The difference between the two is that the latter is capable of producing only a single effect; and, moreover, when the being possessing the non-rational potency meets the agent in the manner appropriate to the potency, it is necessary that the agent act and the patient suffer. The former, however, is capable of producing contrary effects, as the agent possessing the medical art, for example, can produce both disease and health; and the agent is not determined to produce its effects when the object upon which it can act is present, for, since the effects are contraries, it would produce contrary effects at the same time. In this case, an additional determinant, desire or will, is required to decide which of the two effects is to be produced. v, 1047 b 35-1048 a 11.

31. Ib. vi, 1048 a 32.

32. Ib. 1048 a 25-b 8.

33. Which "in a sense" is the most fundamental point of view from which "prior" and "posterior" are considered. Cf. Met. V, xi, esp. 1019 a 11; comp. Categ. xii, 14 a 29-34.

34. Met. IX, viii, 1050 a 4-10.

35. Vide supra, p. 17. For the form as end, vide infra, p. 23.

36. Met. IX, viii, 1050 a 31-34.

37. Ib. vi, 1048 b 25-28.

38. Ib. viii, 1050 a 23.

Chapter IV

1. Met. IX, viii, 1050 a 16-19. For the senses in which a thing is said to be in another, cf. Phys. IV, iii, 210, a 15-24; as in its good or its end, a 22-23.

2. Meteorologica IV, xii, 390 a 10-19.

3. Met. IX, viii, 1049 b 9.

4. Cf. De Caelo II, iii, 268 a 8: "Everything which has a function exists for its function."

5. Phys. II, i, 192 b 22-23. By adding the qualification "in virtue of itself and not in virtue of a concomitant attribute" Aristotle in one stroke excludes artificial things from the sphere of the natural and chance and spontaneity from being natural causes. Artificial things act and suffer action, but they act and suffer not in virtue of what they are as artificial things but in virtue of the natural bodies of which they are composed and which as such are merely concomitent to artificial things as such. A bed, for instance, might sprout if it were planted or it may be burned, but only in virtue of the active and passive potencies, respectively, of the wood of which it is made. For "incidental causes" cf. Met. V, ii, 1013 b 30-1014 a 6; Phys. II, ii, 195 a 33-b 11. For chance and spontaneity, vide infra, pp. 24-25.

6. For the most complete enumeration and explication of the various senses of "nature" cf. Met. V, iv.

7. Phys. II, i, 193 b 7-8. On the expression "to be what it is" cf. Met. V, iv, 1014 b 35-1015 a 11-12: "'Nature' means the essence of natural objects.....By an extension of meaning from this sense of 'nature' every essence in general has come to be called a 'nature', because the nature of a thing is one kind of essence."

8. Met. V, iv, 1015 a 5, in respect of the "primary and strict" sense of "nature", i.e. form or essence.

9. Ib. 1015 a 16.

10. Phys. II, vii, 198 a 25-29.

11. Vide supra, p. 18.

12. Cf. Phys. I, ix, where matter is said to "desire" the form. This mode of expression cannot be taken apart from its context. Aristotle here is purposively using the language which the Platonism he is critizing suggests to him.

> Admitting with them [scil. the Platonists] that there is something divine, good, and desirable, we hold that there are two other principles, the one contrary to it [scil. the privation of the form], and the other [scil. matter] such as of its own nature to desire and yearn for it. But the consequence of their view is that the contrary desires its own distinction. Yet the form cannot desire itself, for it is not defective; nor can the contrary desire it, for contraries are mutually destructive. The truth is that what desires the form is the matter, as the female desires the male and the ugly the beautiful -- only the ugly or the female not per se but per accidens. 192 a 17-24.

The point last made is that the ugly and the female relative to the beautiful and the male are incomplete realizations of the form in its matter and hence desire the latter as the incomplete may be said, in general, to desire completion or that which has the full reality of its species; but they desire not as things whose very nature is to be incomplete, but as things which are per accidens incomplete in the sense of being deficient in the respect of the excellence proper to the species. Cf. Met. V, xvi, passim. esp. 1021 b 15-17. Matter, on the other hand, as lacking any determination, is per se incomplete and hence desires the form by its very nature.

13. Met. VII, xvii, 1041 a 31-32.

14. Phys. II, vii, 198 b 9.

15. Phys. II, v-vi.

16. Ib. viii, 198 b 33-199 a 8.

17. De Gen. et Cor. II, vi, 333 b 5-15.

18. Ib. 333 b 19.

19. Met. VII, vii, 1032 a 25-b 24; De Partibus Animalium I, i, 639 b 17-32

20. The parallelism is so strict that Aristotle even ventures to say that if the products of art were made by nature or if natural products were made by art, the process by which either accomplishes its end would remain the same. Phys. II, viii, 199 a 13-15.

21. Phys. II, viii, 199 a 26-33.

22. Ib. ix, 200 a 13-14; cf. De Part. Anim. I, i, 639 b 21ff. The reason why simple or absolute necessity is excluded from nature and from art is that the products of nature and art are such that they may or may not be. Absolute necessity wherein the consequent follows necessarily from the antecedent, as well as conversely, occurs only in eternal things where it is absolutely necessary that the consequent be. It would be only on the assumption that a man or a house must come to be that either should necessarily result from the proper disposition of the matter in which they are realized. Cf. De Gen. et Cor. II, xi, 337 b 10-338 b 6.

23. Phys. II, i, 192 b 9-23.

24. De Caelo IV, iii, 310 a 32-b 1. Thus fire moves toward the upper place and earth toward the lower, and at the end of the movement the upper and lower places belong respectively to each, for the reason that such movement is the actualization of a proper poten-

tiality at the completion of which the proper end is attained, just as the healable, Aristotle illustrates, when moved attains health and not a greater bulk. For the most part, the examples he chooses are drawn from art, but he notes the difference. That which can be healed qua healable needs ordinarily an agent other than itself; but the elements, a propos to the example in question, have the source of their movement, the actualization of their potencies, within themselves. "The reason," Aristotle remarks, "why the heavy and the light appear more than these things to contain within themselves the source of their movements is that their matter is nearest to being. This is indicated by the fact that locomotion belongs to bodies only when isolated from other bodies, and is generated last out of the several kinds of movement; in order of being then it will be first." Ib. IV, iii, 310 b 32-311 a 1.

25. De Caelo IV, iii, 311 a 1-6. Cf. De Gen. et Cor. II, viii: "Each of them tends to be borne toward its own place: but the 'figure' -- i.e. the 'form' -- of them all is at the limits." 335 a 20-22.

26. Every compound is composed of all the elementary bodies. Cf. De Gen. et Cor. II, viii, passim.

27. It is enough to explain the movements of their uncompounded parts in order to understand the movements of the compounds. Cf. De Caelo IV, ii, 309 b 20-21; iv, 311 a 30-35.

28. De Anima II, i, 412 a 29.

29. Ib. iv, 415 b 13.

30. Ib. 415 b 14.

31. Ib. 415 b 15-20. Cf. De Part. Anim. I, v, 645 b 14-19.

32. Ib. 416 b 18.

33. Ib. 416 b 23-25. Cf. De Caelo, II, xiv: "It is right to call anything that which nature intends it to be and which belongs to it, rather than which it is by constraint and contrary to nature," 297 b 22-23.

34. De Generatione Animalium, II, vi, 742 a 30-32.

35. De Anima, III, xii, 434 a 30-435 a 10.

36. De Incessu Animalium, ii, 704 b 11-17

Chapter V

1. De Part. Anim. II, x, 656 a 8-9. Cf. IV, x, 686 a 29-30; De Gen. Anim. II, iii, 736 b 28.

2. De An. I, i, 403 a 10-11.

3. Ib. II, i, 413 a 3-7.

4. Ib. III, iv, 429 b 22-23.

5. Ib. I, iv, 408 b 18-29; II, ii, 413 b 24-29.

6. Ib. III, v, 430 a 23. The immortality and eternity which Aristotle finds thus to belong to the acting power of the human soul is the reason he speaks of it as "divine" or "more divine" than any other soul; for the term "divine" to the Greeks was applied to anything according to the relative long lastingness of its life. Aristotle himself points out this usage: "All men have some conception of the nature of the gods, and all who believe in the existence of gods at all, whether barbarian or Greek, agree in allotting the highest place to the deity, surely because they suppose that immortal is linked with immortal and regard any other supposition as inconceivable." De Caelo I, iii, 270 b 6-9. "This word 'duration' possessed a divine significance for the ancients, for the fulfillment which includes the period of life of any creature, outside of which no natural development can fall, has been called duration. On the same principle the fulfillment of the whole heaven, the fulfillment which includes all time and infinity, is 'duration' -- a name based upon the the fact that it is always -- duration immortal and divine." I, ix, 279 a 23-28. "The ancients gave to the Gods the heaven or upper place, as being alone immortal." II, i, 284 a 12. "The activity of God is immortality, i.e. eternal life." II, iii, 286 a 9.

7. Eth. Nic. I, ii, 1094 a 18-22. Cf. Met. V for the impossibility of an infinite series of final causes, ii, 994 a 8-9, b 9-16.

8. Eth. Nic. I, vi, 1096 b 32-1097 a 14.

9. Ib. vii, 1097 a 24-b 21.

10. Ib. vii, 1097 b 25-32.

11. Although calling it the "active life" identifies it as second actuality, i.e. the exercise of the rational potency. Vide supra, pp. 18-20.

12. Vide supra, p. 16, n. 30.

13. Eth. Nic. I, vii, 1097 b 23-1098 a 19. Aristotle insists that happiness is an "activity" of the soul because activity or action denotes "life" in its more proper sense. 1098 a 7. For activity as the proper sense of actuality, vide supra, pp.18-20.

When Aristotle turns to find his own view in harmony with that of others he concludes likewise that happiness is activity. Goods relating to soul are properly and most truly goods; for while he agrees with the Pythagorean and Platonic division of goods into external goods, those of the body, and those of the soul, the identification of happiness with "certain actions and activities" allows the good for man to fall among goods of the soul rather than any other class. viii, 1098 b 12-19. Moreover, the happy man is thought to live well and do well, and happiness must thus be a good living and a good action. 1098 b 20-22. Further, if the chief good is placed merely in a state of mind, it is conceivable that it may exist without producing any good action at all, as when a man is asleep or otherwise inactive; whereas one possessing happiness will act and act well by the very fact that it is itself an activity and the best for man. 1098 b 30-1099 a 6.

14. Ib. xiii, 1103 a 3.

15. Ib. II, ii, 1106 b 36-1107 a 2.

16. Ib. VI, i-ii, 1188 a 35-1139 b 13.

17. Ib. iv, 1140 b 5-6, 20.

18. Ib. 1140 b 7.

19. Ib. vii, 1141 b 15.

20. Ib. x, 1143 a 8.

21. Ib. xii, 1144 a 7-9.

22. Ib. 1144 a 30-35.

23. Ib. xiii, 1144 b 30-31.

24. Ib. vi, 1140 b 31-1141 a 8.

25. Ib. iii, 1139 b 19-35. Cf. Analytica Posteriora I, ii, 71 b 9-15.

26. Ib. vii, 1141 a 12-b 23.

27. Ib. xii, 1143 b 18-20, where this is advanced as an objection and difficulty.

28. Ib. 1144 a 1-3.

29. Ib. 1144 a 5-6. That is, as a rational potency whose actualization is in the exercise of the activity itself. Vide supra, pp. 18-20.

30. There are apparently two views of the happy life in the Ethica Nichomachea, the life of practical wisdom and the life of philosophic wisdom, of which Aristotle holds that the latter is the higher. The political philosopher he calls the "architect of the end, with a view to which we call one thing bad and another good without qualification." VII, xi, 1152 b 2-3. But practical wisdom is not supreme over philosophic, for "to maintain its supremacy would be like saying that the art of politics rules the gods because it issues orders about all the affairs of the state." VI, xiii, 1145 a 10-11.

In neglecting the problem of reconcilation of the two lives, our discussion may appear to be an over-simplification; but this problem does not fall within the scope of our treatment of the good.

31. Vide supra, p. 32.

32. Eth. Nic. X, vii, 1177 a 12-18.

33. Pleasure, to Aristotle, is the completion of an activity, "as an end which supervenes as the bloom of youth does on those in the flower of their age;" and as long as the faculty exercising the activity is in its proper condition, its proper pleasure is involved in its fulfillment. Cf. Eth. Nic. X, iv, passim. esp. 1174 b 15-1175 a 3. Pleasures differ according to the activities of which they are the completion, and they are superior in the measure that their activities are superior. Cf. X, v, passim. esp. 1175 b 36-1176 a 3.

34. Ib. X, vii, 1177 a 12-b 25.

35. Ib. 1177 b 26-1178 a 8.

36. Ib. X, viii, passim.

Chapter VI

1. Met. XII, i, 1069 a 30-b 2; vi, 1071 b 3. This classification corresponds to the division of things in the world into those which are always motionless, those always in motion, and those which admit of both motion and rest, the establishment of which is the core of the argument of Phys. VIII, iii-ix.

2. Met. vi, 1071 b 9. Cf. Phys. VIII, i, where time is either "the number of motion or itself a kind of motion." 251 b 12.

3. Phys. VIII, i, 251 b 10-28. Other arguments in the same place: to say that motion had a beginning is to say that some change existed before the first change that would have brought either the mover or the movable into the particular condition requisite to effect the first change; and to say that motion will have an end is to say that some change will exist after the last change, for the last destructive agent itself will have to be destroyed. 251 a 8-252 a 4. The view that motion is not eternal is nothing less than "fantastic."

4. De Gen. et Cor. II, ix, 335 a 33-b 5.

5. De Gen. et Cor. II, x, 335 a 28-32. The last cause enumerated here is given as a second cause along with matter in a similar distinction in I, iii, where the context is limited to the discussion of the same question from the point of view of the material cause alone. It is called "the source from which, as we say, the process originates." 318 a 1. In a 4-5 it is distinguished into something immovable through all time, the discussion of which Aristotle defers to the Metaphysics, and something always moved, which he leaves to the context we are now considering.

6. They "are not sufficient to bring things into being." Ib. 335 a 32.

7. De Gen. et Cor. I, vii, 324 a 25-34. Cf. Phys. VIII, v, passim.

8. Cf. n.5, supra.

9. Met. XII, vi, 1071 b 10-11. Cf. Phys. VIII, vii-ix on such movement.

10. Ib. 1072 a 9-18; De Gen. et Cor. II, x, 336 a 15-b 24.

11. Ib. vii, 1072 a 23-25.

12. Cf. Phys. VIII, v, for the complete development of this argument.

13. Met. XII, vii, 1072 b 1-4.

14. Phys. VIII, vi, 258 b 27-259 a 8.

15. De Gen. et Cor. II, x, 336 b 27-35.

16. De Anima II, iv, 415 a 25-b 7.

17. De Gen. Anim. II, i, 731 b 24-37.

18. Vide supra, p. 17.

19. Met. IX, viii, 1050 b 5-27.

20. Cf. De Gen. et Cor. II, xi, 338 b 7-20.

21. Cf. Met. XII, vii, 1072 b 14-29; ix passim.

22. Eth. Nic. X, viii, 1178 b 22-23

23. Ib. 1179 a 23-32.

24. Met. XII, x, 1075 a 12-24.

25. Cf. De Gen. et Cor. I, iii, 318 a 14-319 b 2. The coming-to-be of one substance is only the passing-away of another and vice versa, generation and destruction being no more than two sides of the same phenomenon. This is the reason that coming-to-be is perpetual from the point of view of the material cause.

The thesis, "Aristotle on the Good", written by Thomas J. Buckley, has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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